

## Toronto Symphony Orchestra

Sir Andrew Davis, Interim Artistic Director

**Friday, November 22, 2019 at 7:30pm**

**Saturday, November 23, 2019 at 8:00pm**

### *An American in Paris*

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**Leonard Slatkin**, conductor

**Jon Kimura Parker**, piano

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Cindy McTee

### **Double Play for Orchestra**

(Canadian Première)

I. The Unquestioned Answer

II. Tempus Fugit

Samuel Barber

### **Piano Concerto, Op. 38**

I. Allegro appassionato

II. Canzone: Moderato

III. Allegro molto

Intermission

Leonard Bernstein

### **Overture to *Candide***

John Corigliano

### **Elegy for Orchestra**

George Gershwin/rev. F. Campbell-Watson

### ***An American in Paris***

*As a courtesy to musicians, guest artists, and fellow concertgoers, please put your phone away and on silent during the performance.*

## ABOUT THE WORKS

Cindy McTee

### **Double Play for Orchestra**

(Canadian Première)

**Born:** Tacoma, Washington, USA,

**Feb 20, 1953**

**Composed:** 2010

17  
min

“A charging, churning celebration of the musical and cultural energy of modern-day America,” says the *Houston Chronicle*, in describing the music of American composer Cindy McTee. According to notable American band director Dr. David C. Fullmer, McTee’s compositional style is characterized by “humour; expectation denied; unexpected silences and rhythmic displacement; jazz textures; post minimalism. She believes... that music either sings or it dances. She characterizes her music as intentionally playful and humorous.”

All these qualities are exhibited in full force in *Double Play*, an orchestral work with two contrasting movements, which can be performed individually, or together as a linked whole. A Detroit Symphony Orchestra commission, *Double Play* is dedicated to the orchestra and its conductor Leonard Slatkin.

The first part, *The Unquestioned Answer*, is an homage to American composer Charles Ives’s 1906 orchestral miniature, *The Unanswered Question*. Like Ives’s work, the strings provide a sustained foundation of sonorities, with consonances glacially shifting into dissonances, against which a five-note theme poses the question/answer. But McTee takes this concept further: whereas the original Ives theme is intoned solely by the trumpet and does not vary, in McTee’s piece, elaborate transformations of this theme are presented by various solo instruments—flute, clarinet, violin, horn, oboe, bassoon, muted trumpet, etc.

Occasionally, the quiet tension is disturbed by the brass and winds, their discordant passages erupting into hair-raising orchestral swells.

Out of the resolution of *The Unquestioned Answer* emerges the sound of wood blocks, which McTee likens to “the sounds of several pendulum clocks ticking at different speeds”: the beginning of *Tempus Fugit (Time Flies)*. The pace accelerates until it stabilizes, on a driving rhythm that McTee says is borrowed from Slatkin’s *Fin* for orchestra. The strings soon join in, with fast-moving repeated motives, on top of which winds and brass interject with rhythms and harmonies referencing bebop jazz. Hi-hat and cowbells, amongst a large array of other percussion, add timbres evoking machine metal, the soundscape of industry. An episode with harried strings gives way to a brief interlude recalling the mood and sonorities of *The Unquestioned Answer*. But it is only a moment’s respite before we return to the noise and rush—the “multifaceted and hurried aspects of 21st-century American society,” in McTee’s words—as the music sprints toward an exhilarating conclusion.

**Program note by Hannah Chan-Hartley**

Samuel Barber

### **Piano Concerto, Op. 38**

**Born:** West Chester, Pennsylvania, USA,

**Mar 9, 1910**

**Died:** New York, New York, USA,

**Jan 23, 1981**

**Composed:** 1961–1962

26  
min

The Barber Piano Concerto received its first TSO performance, by pianist John Browning, at the opening concert of the TSO’s 1963/64 season. This was almost exactly a year after the work was premièred by the Boston Symphony Orchestra, under conductor Erich Leinsdorf, with the same soloist, in New York’s then-brand-new Philharmonic Hall in the Lincoln Center, on September 24, 1962.

The score was commissioned by G. Schirmer, Inc. (Barber's publisher) in celebration of their 100th anniversary. In the 57 years since that New York City première, it has held its place as the most widely-acclaimed 20th-century piano concerto composed on this side of the Atlantic, and a worthy example of Barber's ability to fuse traditional musical concepts with his individual style.

In an effort to match the concerto's technical requirements to the talents of his soloist, Barber invited Browning to visit him and play through much of his performance repertoire. Barber also incorporated certain technical facets of Browning's playing, which he learned from the pianist's celebrated teacher, Rosina Lhévinne, including some formidable runs.

In its florid, flamboyant character, the concerto reflects the keyboard styles of Chopin and Liszt as much as Rachmaninoff and Prokofiev. Lyrical melody, figurative accompaniments, and traditional 19th-century virtuosity are as important to its unfolding as are the massive chords associated with concertos of the late-Romantic period, and the percussive keyboard style adopted by many 20th-century composers. The concerto also leans upon tradition in aspects of form. The first-movement sonata form of the opening, second-movement song form, and rondo finale have all been adapted to Barber's special vision of a concerto.

The work begins with a solo passage presenting two thematic ideas—the first declamatory, the second rhythmic—that are developed extensively later on. However, it appears that Barber did not consider these to be the most important themes of the movement. In his program note for the première, he identified the first theme played by the orchestra as the main idea, and a slower, lyrical theme presented by the solo oboe as the secondary idea. Certain melodic leaps and rhythmic features common to

several themes heard throughout the entire work lend a feeling of similarity among them, and hint at a subconscious evolution from one to the next. In the first movement, a bracing orchestral announcement of the opening rhythmic figure brings on the development section, involving much intense solo playing during concentrated exchanges between the piano and the orchestra. This section comes to a climax in a brilliant cadenza that leads to a compressed recapitulation embellished by more virtuoso playing from the soloist.

The slow middle movement was expanded from an elegy Barber had composed three years earlier for Manfred Ibel, a young German art student, amateur flute player, and the concerto's dedicatee. Above all this gentle movement displays Barber's affinity for a post-Romantic idiom, and his great skill in weaving all the melodic and accompanying materials from a single thematic motif. Flute, oboe, and, finally, the piano involve themselves in its lyrical theme, with the soloist eventually taking centre stage in a searching, elaborately ornamented exploration of its pensive implications.

The finale is the most dissonant, percussive, hard-edged movement in the concerto. Essentially, it is a five-part rondo with two contrasting episodes (ABACA), the first being shorter than the second. Both episodes are set off by a sudden slower pace. The first contrasting episode is particularly noteworthy for its instrumental setting: a clarinet solo accompanied by a repeated rhythmic figure in the xylophone. The movement is set in the irregular meter of 5/8, but it is a tribute to Barber's economy of means that he was able to express all of his thematic ideas within that single meter—not constantly shifting to others as many of his contemporaries would have done. Needless to say, the soloist is kept busy with all manner of virtuosic challenges sprinkled throughout the movement.

**Program note by Carl Cunningham**

## ABOUT THE WORKS

### Leonard Bernstein **Overture to *Candide***

**Born:** Lawrence, Massachusetts, USA,  
Aug 25, 1918  
**Died:** New York, New York, USA,  
Oct 14, 1990  
**Composed:** 1953–1956

5  
min

Conductor, composer, pianist, author, broadcaster, humanitarian—Leonard Bernstein left indelible marks on an astonishing range of endeavours. He was the New York Philharmonic’s music director from 1958 to 1969, the first American-born conductor to take charge of a major US orchestra. In later years, his guest-conducting engagements earned him as lofty an international reputation as the one he enjoyed in America.

He composed music throughout his career, ranging from witty, light-hearted songs and superb stage musicals to substantial operas, ballets, concertos, and symphonies. What unites them is a strong sense of communication, reflecting his deep understanding and celebration of the human condition.

The Broadway musicals *Candide* and *West Side Story* came into being during the same period. *West Side Story* won success from the start, but *Candide* has had a troubled history. The book for the original version, written by famed playwright Lillian Hellman, proved too dark and weighty for the show to find success in the popular theatre. *Candide* had a disastrous initial run of just 73 performances. Bernstein and several different collaborators created further versions, none entirely successful.

The plot comes from a satiric tale by the 18th-century French author Voltaire.

*Candide* is a young man who believes in the philosophy, set out by his teacher, that everything that happens must be for the best. His adventures take him around the world and involve him in a long series of catastrophes. In the end, he renounces his former outlook and resolves to build a new, honest, and hopeful life.

Bernstein’s bright and witty music has always been *Candide*’s strong suit. It pays satiric homage to the play’s period setting through take-offs on the classical dances and the empty-headed operatic conventions of the story’s period. The overture weaves together snippets of the score’s themes into a bright, vivacious potpourri that makes it the perfect curtain-raiser, before or after intermission, in concerts of many kinds.

**Program note by Don Anderson**

### John Corigliano **Elegy for Orchestra**

**Born:** New York, New York, USA,  
Feb 16, 1938  
**Composed:** 1965

8  
min

In his own program note for this work, John Corigliano wrote:

“My *Elegy* is based on an incidental score I wrote for an off-Broadway production of Wallace Frey’s *Helen*—an account of the aging Helen of Troy. The *Elegy* develops ideas which originally accompanied the bittersweet love scene between Helen (age 40) and Telemachus (age 20).

“The brief work, set at a single slow tempo, begins quickly with a key passage for paired flutes, builds during its course to two double forte climaxes for full orchestra, and finally subsides to a pianissimo close for strings and woodwinds. Stylistically, as the dedication

to Samuel Barber might suggest, the work identifies itself with neo-romantic American style, typified in a diversity of works by Barber himself, Walter Piston, or William Schuman.”

Barber and Corigliano shared a music publisher (G. Schirmer), but musically they shared more than that. As Peter Dickinson wrote in *Gramophone* in March 1997, “*Elegy* provides early evidence that the mantle of Samuel Barber, to whom it is dedicated, would fall on Corigliano....Both composers contradicted fashions by querying any necessity for their music to be difficult.” That being said, it doesn’t do to pigeonhole Corigliano’s prolific output too narrowly. He came to classical music early: his father was concertmaster of the New York Philharmonic between 1943 and 1966, so he soaked up a lot of different sounds and textures, at rehearsals and at concerts, from a very young age.

“I also became interested in the orchestra when I got my first monaural hi-fi set,” Corigliano said in a telephone interview with Rick Rogers for *The Oklahoman* in early 2000. “I was intrigued with Copland’s *Billy the Kid* because of the bass drum hits [that represent] the gunfight. I just became in love with the spacings and the counterpoint and the way the man rhythmically dealt with things. Later I got the score and then heard more Copland and Stravinsky. I really got interested through the phonograph.”

Copland saw something in Corigliano as well, calling Corigliano “the real thing” after hearing his 1977 Clarinet Concerto. From early works for choir, solo voice, and piano in 1959, to “Lucy’s Aria” from *The Lord of Cries* for string quartet in 2016, his scores number over 100, including three film scores, an opera, 29 major orchestral works, and dozens of chamber, choral, vocal and piano/keyboard compositions, garnering him a Pulitzer Prize, five GRAMMY® Awards, and an Oscar in 1997 (for François Girard’s *The Red Violin*).

Through it all, as Rick Rogers notes, “he remains an eclectic at heart, often

juxtaposing disparate elements ranging from Renaissance influences and 12-tone rows to minimalist techniques and romantic lushness....He has constantly reinvented himself and explored new musical vistas in the process.”

**Program note by David Perlman**

## George Gershwin *An American in Paris*

**Born: Brooklyn, New York, USA,**

**Sep 26, 1898**

**Died: Beverly Hills, California, USA,**

**Jul 11, 1937**

**Composed: 1928**

**17**  
min

With his *Rhapsody in Blue*, in 1924, Gershwin announced that he had musical ambitions transcending the forms and instrumental ensembles required by his Broadway shows and Tin Pan Alley songs. The conductor Walter Damrosch encouraged him to try his hand at “classical” composition, and commissioned two substantial works from him: the Concerto in F, for piano and orchestra, in 1925, and the symphonic poem *An American in Paris*, in 1928. The latter was actually composed on the spot, during Gershwin’s triumphant visit to Paris, where he called on some of the greatest composers of the day (Ravel, Poulenc, Milhaud, Prokofiev), attended countless parties and salons, and found his music and his piano playing lionized by French audiences, musicians, and critics.

He still sought to sanctify his music by incorporating classical procedures, but Ravel famously advised him, “Why should you be a second-rate Ravel when you can be a first-rate Gershwin?” At the end of the summer of 1928, Gershwin returned to New York, with the piano version of *An American in Paris* already in hand; in mid-November, he completed the orchestration.

## ABOUT THE WORKS

The work had its première in Carnegie Hall on December 13, 1928, under Damrosch's baton, and despite its mixed critical reception (always the bane of Gershwin's "classical" pieces) it quickly became a fixture of the international symphonic repertory.

Deems Taylor, in the celebrated program note he wrote (with the composer's input) for the première, set the scene this way: "You are to imagine an American, visiting Paris, swinging down the Champs-Élysées on a mild, sunny morning in May or June. Being what he is, he starts without preliminaries, and is off at full speed at once, to the tune of The First Walking Theme, a straightforward, diatonic air, designed to convey an impression of Gallic freedom and gaiety..."

That infectious first tune opens onto a whole series of Walking Themes and other short musical ideas that, beyond testifying to Gershwin's bottomless imagination for melodies and orchestral colours, unforgettably depict a bustling Parisian boulevard; the development of these ideas

makes up the first half of the piece. Along the way are many charming and characteristic details—a brief blast (from an open café window, perhaps?) of Gay Nineties can-can, for example, in the trombones; and the angry tooting of taxi-horns, which Gershwin adds to the percussion battery. (Apparently, he was more amused than terrified by the legendary Paris taxis.)

The tempo slows, and an important new theme appears, played by a solo trumpet (accompanied, in part, by three saxophones). It is a sexy, sinewy tune—a blues, perhaps suggesting that our American, however taken with Paris, is a little homesick. But this nostalgic reverie is soon swept away by another new tune, again introduced by a solo trumpet: a rollicking, syncopated Charleston—the sort of American popular music (*le jazz hot*) then taking Europe by storm. These new themes are developed at some length, then the "boulevard" themes from the first half are briefly recapitulated. The blues is recalled in the very last bars: this was, we are reminded one last time, an *American* in Paris.

**Program note by Kevin Bazzana**

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# THE ARTISTS



## **Leonard Slatkin** **conductor**

*Leonard Slatkin made his TSO début in February 1977.*

Internationally acclaimed conductor Leonard Slatkin is music director laureate of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra (DSO) and directeur musical honoraire of the Orchestre National de Lyon (ONL). He maintains a rigorous schedule of guest conducting throughout the world and is active as a composer, author, and educator.

In the 2019/20 season, he will celebrate his 75th birthday year with several of the orchestras he has led over the course of his 50-year career, including the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra, Nashville Symphony Orchestra, DSO, and ONL. Other highlights include return engagements with the Houston Symphony Orchestra, RTÉ National Symphony in Dublin, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, and NHK Symphony Orchestra in Tokyo; débuts with the KBS Symphony Orchestra in Seoul, NDR Radiophilharmonie in Hannover, and Würth Philharmonic in Künzelsau, Germany; as well as three weeks in Spain conducting orchestras in Castile-León, Bilbao, and the Balearic Islands.

Slatkin has received six GRAMMY® awards and 33 nominations. His recent Naxos recordings include works by Saint-Saëns, Ravel, and Berlioz (with the ONL) and music by Copland, Rachmaninov, Borzova, McTee, and John Williams (with the DSO). In addition, he has recorded the complete Brahms, Beethoven, and Tchaikovsky symphonies with the DSO (available online as digital downloads).

A recipient of the prestigious National Medal of Arts, Slatkin also holds the rank of Chevalier in the French Legion of Honour. He has received Austria's Decoration of Honour in Silver, the League of American Orchestras' Gold Baton Award, and the 2013 ASCAP Deems Taylor Special Recognition Award for his début book, *Conducting Business*. His second book, *Leading Tones: Reflections on Music, Musicians, and the Music Industry*, was published by Amadeus Press in 2017.

Slatkin has conducted virtually all the leading orchestras in the world. As music director, he has held posts in New Orleans; St. Louis; Washington, DC; London (with the BBC Symphony Orchestra); Detroit; and Lyon, France. He has also served as principal guest conductor in Pittsburgh, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, and Cleveland.

# THE ARTISTS



## **Jon Kimura Parker** **piano**

*Jon Kimura Parker made his TSO debut in April 1985.*

A veteran of the international concert stage, with multiple solo appearances at the Berlin Philharmonie, Carnegie Hall, London's South Bank, the Sydney Opera House, and the Beijing Concert Hall, Jon Kimura Parker continues to perform to great acclaim.

He is an Officer of the Order of Canada and holds honorary doctorates from the University of British Columbia and the Royal Conservatory of Music. His long association with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra dates back several decades and includes being soloist on their Pacific Rim tour in 1990.

A collaborator in a wide variety of styles, Jon Kimura Parker has worked with Doc Severinsen, Audra McDonald, Bobby McFerrin, Pablo Ziegler, and Sanjaya Malakar. As a founding member of quintet Off the Score, Jon Kimura Parker performed in Toronto with legendary Police drummer Stewart Copeland at the 21C Festival, featuring his own arrangements of music by Prokofiev, Ravel, and Stravinsky. Mr. Parker also tours with the Montrose Trio with violinist Martin Beaver and cellist Clive Greensmith.

This summer, Mr. Parker appeared at the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center; Toronto Summer Music; Ravinia Festival; and at the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival in recital with Susan Graham. Earlier this season, Mr. Parker appeared at Lincoln Center with violinist Cho-Liang Lin in works by Paul Schoenfield, Steven Stucky, and John Harbison. In the 2019/20 season, Mr. Parker performs the complete Beethoven Piano Concerti, as well as concerti by Barber, Grieg, and Tchaikovsky.

His YouTube channel features *Concerto Chat* videos, promoting the piano concerto repertoire. He has lectured at The Juilliard School, NYU, Yale, and Princeton. He is the artistic director of the Honens International Piano Competition and Festival in Calgary, and the founding artistic advisor of the Orcas Island Chamber Music Festival, where he has given world premières of new works by Peter Schickele and Jake Heggie. Jon Kimura Parker is professor of piano at the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University.

“Jackie” Parker studied with Edward Parker and Keiko Parker, Lee Kum-Sing at the Vancouver Academy of Music and the University of British Columbia, Marek Jablonski at the Banff Centre, and Adele Marcus at The Juilliard School. He won the Gold Medal at the 1984 Leeds International Piano Competition. He is married to violinist/violist Aloysia Friedmann, and their daughter Sophie is a junior at Rice University. For further information, please see [jonkimuraparker.com](http://jonkimuraparker.com), [montrosetrio.com](http://montrosetrio.com), [offthescore.com](http://offthescore.com), [oicmf.org](http://oicmf.org), and [honens.com](http://honens.com).